

VZCZCXRO2580
RR RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHSB #0241/01 0811448
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 221448Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1287
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 1536
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 1394
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1540
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0209
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0802
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1166
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 1595
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 3999
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1365
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 2023
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0665
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1757

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000241

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR S. HILL
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/22/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE'S INCREASED VIOLENCE A GOZ CREATION

REF: A. REF A: HARARE 227 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. REF B: HARARE 130

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Eric Schultz under Section 1.4 b
/d

Summary

[1](#)1. (U) While the GOZ has tried to portray the MDC as a purveyor of violence, largely by trumpeting two alleged petrol bomb attacks, there is scant evidence to support their claims. In fact, we hear every day of more and more evidence of government-sponsored violence. On March 22, Save Zimbabwe Campaign leaders told us that a second MDC activist had died as a result of police beatings on March 11. Indiscriminate police violence also continues in Harare's high-density suburbs as well as other major cities. While MDC and civil society demonstrations have been largely peaceful, there are reports that GOZ brutality has begun to trigger a backlash from opposition youths. Separately, Sekai Holland and Grace Kwinjeh arrived in South Africa for treatment today after a High Court judge ordered police to release their passports. End Summary.

"Firebombings" Appear to be GOZ Propaganda

[1](#)2. (SBU) The GOZ has attempted to blame the opposition for two supposed firebombings at police stations in Harare and Gweru on March 13. However, the links to the opposition are tenuous. In fact, there is no firm evidence that the attacks occurred at all. We have heard several rumors that the

"firebombing" at a police camp in Harare on March 13 was actually an accident, either caused by a paraffin stove or improperly stored fuel seized from black market dealers. (Note. Counseling Services Unit (CSU) Director Frances Lovemore told us the two officers burnt in Harare, whose faces the GOZ splashed over the front pages of the government-controlled press, suffered only relatively minor injuries.)

¶3. (SBU) Meanwhile, police officials in Gweru have sealed off the barracks where a separate firebombing allegedly occurred on March 13, according to a ZLHR lawyer, prohibiting opposition attorneys from confirming the attack. Within hours of the alleged firebombing police began arresting opposition leaders despite the lack of eye-witnesses or evidence. Police quickly rounded up six "suspects", including an MDC city councilor, two local MDC officials, and a local NCA leader, according to the opposition lawyer. The six appeared in court on March 16, charged with "sabotage and terrorism", and were released on bail.

----- --
Second Victim of March 11 Crack Down Identified
----- --

¶4. (U) Christian Alliance (CA) pastors at a press conference on March 22 announced that a second MDC activist, Itai Manyeruke, had died as a result of injuries he sustained as police disrupted the March 11 prayer rally. Archbishop Pius Ncube of Bulawayo, presiding over the CA meeting, condemned the police violence and said the time was now for peaceful resistance to the regime.

HARARE 00000241 002 OF 003

¶5. (SBU) On the margins of the briefing, Crisis Coalition director Jacob Mafume told poloff that the 30-year old Manyeruke had been beaten by police in Highfield on March 11 and then taken to Harare Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival. Mafume said he was unaware if a formal autopsy had been conducted, but said the death appeared to have resulted from brunt-trauma beatings, as opposed to the shooting death of Tandare. Mafume said police had taken Manyeruke's corpse to a mortuary, without notifying the family. After an extensive search of police stations and hospitals, Mafume said Manyeruke's family found the body only a few days ago and buried the body on March 21 during a small ceremony.

----- --
Government Violence Continues
----- --

¶6. (SBU) Meanwhile, indiscriminate violence continued, focused primarily in Harare's high-density suburbs but also spreading to other cities across Zimbabwe. NCA leader Lovemore Madhuku on March 20 told us that police in southwest Harare were randomly enforcing a curfew and harassing people who had gathered in small groups even to walk to work. Police, working in concert with local ZANU-PF supports, had even threatened opposition leaders at their homes. As a result, some opposition activists had gone into hiding, fearing further assaults.

¶7. (SBU) Frances Lovemore, Director of the USG-supported Counseling Services Unit, which provides medical assistance to victims of government violence, told us March 21 that CSU has treated 150 opposition supporters for a range of injuries sustained at police hands since February 18 when the GOZ cracked down on another MDC rally in Highfield (ref B). More victims were coming to CSU everyday after initially hiding in Harare's high density suburbs, fearful of reprisals from police.

¶8. (C) Madhuku said the indiscriminate police violence had raised the potential that angry opposition could carry out

reprisal attacks against GOZ and ZANU-PF officials. Opposition leaders had not sanctioned such violence, and to his knowledge none had as yet occurred. However, the GOZ had pushed average Zimbabweans to their breaking point, making them more likely to strike out in unpredictable ways. In that regard, Francis Lovemore told us that militant MDC activists, including some with military ties who had left Zimbabwe years ago, had begun filtering back in recent weeks.

Court Orders Release, Injured Activists Finally Depart

¶9. (SBU) Australian Embassy poloff informed us that seriously injured MDC activists Sekai Holland) who is married to an Australian - and Grace Kwinjeh arrived in Johannesburg this afternoon for medical treatment. Earlier in the day a High Court Judge ordered police to release their travel papers. The two activists finally departed Harare airport after a delay of almost a week that put Holland's health in particular in jeopardy. Separately, pro-Senate MDC president Arthur Mutambara on March 22 informed poloff that police had also returned his passport which they seized when they re-arrested him on March 17. Mutambara, who was released from custody on March 20 after being arrested on March 17, said he planned to briefly visit his wife and

HARARE 00000241 003 OF 003

children in Johannesburg and then return to Harare this weekend.

Memorial Service Planned

¶10. (C) Madhuku informed us that the memorial service for Gift Tandare, the MDC activist killed on March 11, would be held in Harare on the morning of Tuesday, March 27. The service has been delayed several times following the government,s seizure at gunpoint of Tandare,s body this past weekend. Save Zimbabwe Campaign pastors planned to identify an appropriate church where the ceremony would be held; opposition supporters would march to the venue. Madhuku noted that diplomatic observers would be invited.

Comment

¶11. (C) Government propaganda aside it is clear that the violence of the past few weeks has been instigate by the GOZ and its security forces. That said, they are meeting unaccustomed resistance not just from MDC activists but from ordinary Zimbabweans. The violence may therefore escalate further and the memorial service could still serve as a flash point, especially if it involves a public march by the MDC. We plan to attend the service, though not participate in the march, and learned today that most of our European colleagues plan to do so as well.

SCHULTZ